

Lincoln County Land Information, Conservation Committee and University Extension
Minutes of Tuesday November 15th, 2011 2:30pm
Lincoln County Service Center
Lower Level Conference Room 156
801 N Sales Street
Merrill, WI 54452

Members: Jim Alber, Frank Saal, Ray Bloomer and Ramona Pampuch

Excused Members: Dave Fox

Visitors: Jean Berger, Frank Zebro, Jean Maszk, Janette Baumann, Mary Kluz, Debbie Moellendorf, Tom Schmitz, Randy Scholz, Art Lersch, Gary Beastrom, Ralph Weeks, Hans Breitenmoser, and David Williams (by phone)

1. Call Meeting to Order:

The Land Information, Conservation and UW-Extension committee meeting was called to order by Chair Alber at 2:30 p.m.

2. Public comment

No public comment

UW-EXTENSION

3. Joint Meeting with Marathon County Extension Committee on Ag Educator Position

a. Results of County Visioning Session

Mary Kluz facilitated discussion from both committees on the vision sessions held in both Lincoln and Marathon Counties. Marathon County representatives stated dairy is very strong and necessary for full time educator in Marathon County in this area. Lincoln County representatives stated that at their visioning session they heard comments from attendees that the business management aspect was highly valued in all areas of agriculture, not just dairy. In Lincoln County grazing in both beef and dairy is an emerging area as well as the diversity of communities engaged in farming such as mennonites. Marathon County also has a diverse population engaged in agriculture. Comments from members of both committees indicated that there were many similarities between the discussions in both counties. Areas such as nutrient management and land use need to be addressed in both counties. Mary then asked for any differences that people noticed between the discussions in the two counties. Lincoln County indicated that they felt the grazing education was downplayed in Marathon County. Marathon County indicated that this may have been due to the fact that Paul Daigle in their CPZ Department worked with Tom in this area and continues to do this but should not be abandoned as an area that an ag agent would support. There was a question about whether there was a diverse group in attendance at both sessions. Tom Schmitz felt that both counties had done a good job of inviting people from a variety of sectors and that each session had a good representation in attendance. Due to conflicts in schedules, some individuals invited were unable to attend. The visioning sessions is one source of information to use in determining areas that an ag educator would focus on.

The discussion then focused on the need to establish whether both counties want to share a joint Ag Educator and if so what is needed in both. Lincoln County committee members then shared that currently the funding for the Ag Educator position is not included in the 2012 department budget. Per any open position that has not been approved for refilling, the funding for the position was removed from the department budget during the 2012 budget process. The committee will need to move the position forward through the approval process (committee, personnel and full county board) and if approved funding would be put back in the budget through contingency funds. Marathon County committee members indicated that funding for the 1.5 positions was included in their 2012 budget. Mary then asked for input from David Williams, Assistant State Program Leader for ANRE program area. David referred to a handout he

prepared of the similarities and differences from the visioning sessions held in both counties. He indicated that there are strong dairy farms in Lincoln County. Marathon County needs a full time person with dairy and perhaps this person could cross the border to provide this in Lincoln County. Members commented that a shared position would need to be diverse in ag and know about a variety of areas including horticulture, soil management, planning for use of land, educating the general public about agriculture and needs of agriculture sector, alternative methods of production, and use of technology and be a good promoter of Extension resources.

b. Partnership between Marathon and Lincoln County

The prior item's discussion included the partnership between the two counties. Both committees were in agreement that they would like to pursue continuing this partnership between the two counties for a Joint Ag Educator position.

c. Update on Extension Hiring Status – Tom Schmitz, Central District Director Cooperative Extension

Tom Schmitz explained that due to the current status of state and federal budgets, Cooperative Extension is in a managed staffing plan. In this managed staffing plan, he must reduce the district budget by 5% in base funds which are used to fund county positions. This equates to approximately 2.5 positions. He is currently working with the District Resource Management Team to look at all open positions in the district and submit recommendations to Dean Klemme about what positions to move forward in filling by a November 30th deadline. This team has recommended that he forward the full time Marathon County Ag position. If the Dean agrees, this position could be posted around the first of the year. The next deadline for moving positions forward will be in December/January with these positions moving forward if approved by the Dean. This would be the soonest that the Joint Ag position could be moved forward. Tom advised both committees to look at what you want in the position and any request will be stronger if funding is in place for that position at the county level.

d. Explore Staffing Possibilities – David Williams, Assistant State Program Leader of Ag and Natural Resources Program area

Dave then shared the ANRE program area has several models of sharing specializations among educators across areas of the state. Some are through shared positions where an educator covers multiple counties like the shared position has here. While others are an arrangement where educators from multiple counties share their expertise with other counties in that multi-county area. This allows an educator to focus their work in that area and content area which allows them to provide that area of expertise beyond the county they are located in. Other educators involved in the specialization arrangement do the same for clientele located in that educators county. Another area Dave felt the committee should be aware of is the potential vacancy in the future at the Marshfield ag research station. This person does a lot of work in heifer management area and may be some opportunities in the future regarding this position.

e. Next Steps

Next steps would be for each committee to create a position description for what they are looking for, then mesh them together for the Joint Position Description and create/update a memorandum of understanding between the two counties for the position.

f. Adjourn Joint Meeting

Motion by Bloomer second by Pampuch to adjourn the Lincoln County portion of the Joint Meeting at 4 p.m. Motion carried.

4. Recess and move Lincoln County Committee to Room 247/248

Chair Alber called for a recess for the Lincoln County Committee to move to Room 247/248 to continue their meeting to allow the Marathon County Committee to continue their meeting in Room 156.

5. Reconvene Lincoln County Committee (only)

Chair Alber reconvened the Lincoln County committee meeting in Room 247/248 with all members present, Randy Scholz, Tom Schmitz and Debbie Moellendorf at 4:10 p.m.

6. Lincoln County Ag Educator Position – Contract

Motion by Alber second by Saal to enter into an agreement with Marathon County in hiring a shared Ag Educator and to forward a memorandum of understanding to the Marathon County committee. Discussion followed. Motion carried with Bloomer voting nay.

Motion by Pampuch second by Bloomer to move forward with the process to extend funding for the interim Ag Educator position into 2012. Discussion followed. Motion carried.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Alber second by Saal to adjourn at 4:32 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Debbie Moellendorf, Terri Pankow, and Janette Baumann (Marathon County for Joint Meeting item 3)